

# Bishop Williamson Vindicated, then Ousted

[Nicholas Kollerstrom](#)

*"Throughout my life, I have always sought the truth. That is why I converted to Catholicism and became a priest." ...Bishop Williamson to Der Spiegel.*

VATICAN CITY, 2009 Jan. 30 – A Holocaust-denying bishop who was readmitted to the Catholic Church apologized Friday to Pope Benedict XVI for the "unnecessary distress and problems" caused by his "imprudent remarks". He had told Swedish television that "historical evidence is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler." [\[1\]](#)

The whole world heard the message. The whole world talked about it. It was just so staggering, to hear a Catholic priest say something significant. Words of truth, diamond-clear, as if inspired by Jesus Christ Himself, were given to the world. [For an earlier account of what Bishop Williamson said, see Richard Widmann, "The Case of Bishop Williamson" Ed. [\[2\]](#)] But nobody in the public domain was heard discussing them. Maybe (and one hopes in private conversations around the world) his carefully chosen words were weighed, but no discussion of their possible truth was heard in the media, not a single word. He was condemned on all corners, sacked from his job, expelled from the country where he was working, threatened with imprisonment by various bodies, and instructed to recant by the Pope.

It became evident that Jewish bodies such as the Anti-Defamation League could boss the Pope about, tell him what to do and whom to sack. But defrocking a Catholic priest is not easy. Finally he was instructed to recant by the Pope. He did not. The truth of what had happened in history - Bishop Williamson explained - was the most important thing.

A Briton who had served as a bishop in the traditionalist SSPX (Society of Saint Pius X) Catholic order in America for twenty years, had been asked to leave the USA after he made some remarks in 2002 about who was responsible for 9/11, and found himself relocated to Argentina. Then, when visiting Germany for the consecration of a new deacon he was interviewed by a Swedish TV company. That TV interview appears as an entrapment: "Bishop Williamson, are these your words?" he was suddenly asked, out of the blue, at the end of an interview on theological topics, and some comments he had made years earlier were quoted. The good Bishop managed to reply, with diamond-clear words of truth. He said, "I believe up to 300,000 Jews perished in Nazi concentration camps but not one of them by gassing in a gas chamber."



*Bishop Richard Williamson of the Society of Pius X. Photo taken 3 June 1991. By jcapaldi (flickr.com (cropped)) [CC-BY-2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons*

The entrapment was timed (he explained to me) to frustrate the process whereby his 'heretical' branch of the Catholic Church had its four bishops un-excommunicated and it was synchronized with that re-admission. The un-excommunication happened in mid-January, when just days earlier the TV interview had been released. The two events coincided within days! The four SSPX bishops were just getting over being excommunicated for twenty years by Holy Mother Church, when suddenly...

A letter apparently from the head of the SSPX church argued: "It is shameful to use an interview on religious matters to introduce secular and controversial issues with the obvious intention of misrepresenting and maligning the activity of our religious Society." The offending remarks had come at the end of an interview in Germany on Swedish TV. Britain's *Daily Telegraph* reported this in a 'News section,' adding a comment on the 'wicked madness' of the Bishop - with the journalist adding that "I do

not wish to belong to the same Church as Williamson.” Clearly, no other theological issue would elicit so absolute a comment from the *Telegraph* journalist Damian Thompson – a supreme *theological* issue was here at stake. In the view of a *Telegraph* journalist, the Bishop’s judgment concerning a historical event was ‘wicked madness.’

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel suspended contacts with the Vatican.

### **Not an Opinion But a Crime**

On 9 February 2009, a group of ‘World Jewish leaders’ advised the Pope that “denying the Shoah was not an opinion but a crime.” Clearly, no bishop had “denied the *Shoah*’ which alludes to the whole tragic and terrible experience of Jews throughout World War Two- as those ‘World Jewish leaders’ who put out this deceptive statement knew very well.

Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying, "The reinstatement of a Holocaust denier by the Holy See offends every Jew, in Israel and around the world, and humiliates the memory of all Holocaust victims and survivors."

In response, a statement put out by the Vatican said: "Bishop Williamson, in order to be admitted to the Episcopal functions of the Church, must in an absolutely unequivocal and public way distance himself from his positions regarding the *Shoah* [Holocaust]." Then, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told the Pope: "The Pope and the Vatican must make absolutely clear that there can be no denial of the Holocaust." But Bishop Williamson would not recant. He instead declared that: "If I find this proof, then I will correct myself. But that will require some time" and added an apology for the "distress" he had caused the pope, regretting that his comments had been ‘imprudent.’

An admission of ‘imprudence’ turned out not to be quite adequate. Fifty Catholic members of the United States Congress then wrote to Pope Benedict to express their "deep concerns." They wrote, "We do not question your reasons for revoking the excommunication of Bishop Williamson or your right to do so, but we fail to understand why the revocation was not accompanied by an emphatic public rejection of his denial of the Holocaust."[\[3\]](#)

Argentinean officials said, “We are going to make a formal legal complaint and he may face up to three years in prison.” In the event, he was given a ten-day ultimatum to leave the country.

The Bishop had to leave Argentina, moving to the SSPX’s British centre in Wimbledon. For twenty years he had been a much-loved Bishop of the SSPX in America, and four volumes of his pastoral letters were published. Then in 2002 after he made some remarks about who was responsible for the event of 9/11, indicating it was not the Muslims, but alluding to ‘Judaeo-Masonic’ elements,[\[4\]](#) he found himself being asked to leave America faster than you could say ‘Larry Silverstein.’

In his 2010 book, *Light of the World*, Pope Benedict XVI said he would not have lifted the ban on Williamson if he had known of his far-right views. So the Bishop’s statements about who did and did not die during World War Two showed he was ‘far right’ – that is the bit that always puzzles me.

In March 2009 the German lawyer Horst Mahler received a five-year prison sentence for expressing his revisionist views. Then in May 2009 the US Catholic Revisionist Michael Hoffman sent a memorable letter to the Pope, like a ray of sanity in a world gone mad:

*Your Holiness,*

*Is it not true that, under the Second Vatican Council's doctrine of Religious Liberty, Bishop Richard N. Williamson has the right to express his conscience and opinion on the subject of execution gas chambers in Auschwitz? Why is the Council's doctrine of liberty being suspended in his case?*

*Your Secretary of State has made belief in the "Shoah" a criterion for holding office in the Church. Is the rabbinic "Shoah" mysticism now a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church?*

*If so, on what Biblical, patristic and theological basis is the warning of the Apostle Paul in Titus 1:14 now overthrown?*

*Do Catholics no longer have the right to doubt or question aspects of secular history? Does the Magisterium of the Church now decree the undoubted veracity of the figure of Six Million deceased Judaic persons, and the undoubted existence of a mass killing operation in Auschwitz-Birkenau, conducted by means of poison-gas chambers?*

*Are you aware of the extent to which the Crucifixion of Christ has been replaced by Auschwitz as the central ontological event of western history? Do you wish to be complicit in the disastrous effects that continue to accrue from this derogation of Jesus and deification of man?*

*I firmly believe in freedom of speech for Bishop Williamson. I am deeply troubled by your attempted suppression of his rights in this matter. It would seem that, under your pontificate, casting doubt on a supposition of secular history is now a de facto heresy. I can find no grounds for this innovation in Scripture or Catholic tradition.*

(That verse in Paul's Epistle to Titus warned against believing "Jewish myths"!) Maybe the Catholic Church should take some notice of this letter.

In July of 2009 the SSPX in England tried to buy a disused Anglican church in Manchester. The Commissioners of the Church of England declined, on the basis of the Williamson affair – as if the whole SSPX church were somehow contaminated by the view of a Bishop in Argentina. The Diocese of Manchester said it had received a hundred letters of objection to the sale, from MPs, peers, Manchester City Council, the Council of Christians and Jews and even the Roman Catholic Church.

In August a Jewish spokesman opposing the sale remarked: "The Jewish community could not be at peace or live without fear so long as the Society of Saint Pius X remained in this country." [\[5\]](#) It would be hard to conceive any religious movement more devoid of ability to cause harm than the tiny four-Bishop SSPX. But, Jews want to close it down. They successfully blocked the purchase.

In 2010 a German court summoned Bishop Williamson to face charges that he had denied the Holocaust, an offense punishable by up to five years in jail. He declined to come to Germany; in fact his church instructed him not to. In July, 2011 the over-seventy bishop was instructed to pay 6,500 euros by a German court. That verdict was overturned in March 2012.

Lady Michèle Renouf commented on this judgment: "A reading of the documents suggests that Prof. Weiler (his lawyer) was successful in challenging the very basis of the charges – namely the essential question of at what point Bishop Williamson had committed an offence. Was it illegal simply to make these statements in Germany, even behind closed doors, to the Swedish journalist? Surely this was not a

‘publication.’” Renouf had earlier recommended a lawyer for the bishop, but the head of the SSPX had objected. She travels round Europe interviewing people who have been jailed for their beliefs, as seen on her site ‘Jailing Opinions.’ We might here add that no woman in the UK is so consistently and heavily vilified both by the media and on blogs as Ms. Renouf.

Here is how the bishop described his victory:

*Many if not all of you readers will have heard by now of last week’s good news from Germany: on Ash Wednesday the Appeals Court of Lower Bavaria in Nuremberg quashed the Regensburg Regional Court’s condemnation of me on 11 July of last year for “racial incitement”. Then I was condemned for having, in November of 2008, on German soil, in an interview to Swedish television, taken a politically incorrect view of certain historical events differing from the view commonly held, but now the Appeals Court has decreed in addition that the Bavarian State must pay my trial costs so far. All honour to my defence lawyer, Prof. Dr. Edgar Weiler, whose arguments the judges made their own, and to Fr. Schmidberger who introduced me to him, and to Bishop Fellay who approved of him.*

So he didn’t recant. Would the SSPX Church allow the good bishop out of his cage – he is after all the only bishop and most senior member in the UK? As this affair echoed around the world – Argentina, Germany, Sweden, Rome, UK – did anyone ask him about the *content* of what he had said, or seek to discuss it with him, I enquired? No, not at all, he replied. I spent a while trawling through blogs, where the good bishop was castigated as mad, sad, dangerous, far-right etc, but nowhere could I see anyone actually wishing to debate the content of what he had said. It had indeed been gratifying to hear a bishop discussing the Leuchter Report in public.[\[6\]](#)

Not a single British newspaper reported this victory. The media were crowing about him when he was expelled from Argentina, but when he won a startling legal victory in Germany – silence.

If the SSPX wanted to fill a large church hall on a Sunday morning - not easy these days - they could do it by allowing Bishop Williamson to give the service. People would come from far and wide, to hear his perceptive, heartwarming and dangerously unpredictable views. But I guess that couldn’t happen, because of a supreme belief which the British people do hold with real fervor, overriding all others, in that which has never existed... Even after his not unremarkable victory (unmentioned in the media), he has not been allowed to preach in the UK. Then in October 2012 the edict for his expulsion came through, on grounds of ‘disobedience.’ A tiny British church lost its only bishop, after he had served in it for forty years.

Tried and condemned by Regensburg’s Regional Court in South Germany in 2010 in his absence, Bishop Williamson had been punished with a fine of €10,000. After appealing, that same Court re-condemned him in 2011, but with a fine of only €6,500. He re-appealed and the case went higher, to the Provincial Court in Nuremberg, where three judges dismissed the case on procedural grounds and obliged the Bavarian State to pay legal expenses. One might have hoped that that would be the end of the matter, but now on 16 January 2013 the Bishop has been re-condemned by Regensburg’s Regional Court, with a fine reduced to only €1,600. A colleague offered to pay the fine and settle the matter, but the Bishop asked him not to: a principle was at stake, he explained.

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**Postscript**

“Harsh and cruel is the religion of the *Shoah*” commented Bradley Smith, concerning the fate of a colleague of Bishop Williamson who spoke out in support.<sup>[7]</sup> On 29 January 2009 don Floriano Abrahamowicz, a Dominican Catholic priest, representing Northeast Italy for the SSPX, dared to speak some words in support of the Bishop: “I know that there were disinfection chambers in the German camps during the war” he declared, adding that he *did not know* whether these were also used for killing people. Lying through its teeth, the Vatican accused him of ‘denying the fact of the Shoah’ – the *Shoah* signifies the collective suffering the Jewish people during the War. The fraternity expelled him, i.e. he could no longer exercise his ministry, then the next thing he knew he was locked out of his own church, which was also his house: all for claiming that he ‘did not know’ something, about what had happened sixty years ago and a thousand miles away. He will only be allowed back to the church on condition that he ‘repents.’

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#### Notes:

- [1] Francis X. Rocca, “Bishop Apologizes to Pope but Does Not Retract Holocaust Denial” *The Washington Post*, January 31, 2009, online: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/30/AR2009013003431.html>
- [2] Richard Widmann, “The Case of Bishop Williamson.” *Smith’s Report* No. 159, March 2009, online: [http://www.codoh.com/sites/default/files/documents/newsite/sr/online/sr\\_159.pdf](http://www.codoh.com/sites/default/files/documents/newsite/sr/online/sr_159.pdf)
- [3] Ibid.
- [4] See video ‘The Courageous Bishop Williamson’ by We Are Change Hollywood: <http://www.montaguekeen.com/page648.html> about the 9/11 issue.
- [5] Source: Father Morgan’s blog, SSPX
- [6] He outlined some findings of Fred Leuchter with the same rather sensible logic as he had earlier applied in commenting upon the Twin Towers collapsing on 9/11: Bishop Williamson’s sermon about this compared Orwell’s 1984 story and the events of 9/11: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooGBMFShUVo> Quoting the words, “The truth will set you free” he added “the corollary is, Lies will enslave you,” and named the supreme lie of our modern age as 9/11, “a classic example of an enslaving lie.” We learn that: “Catholic bishop Richard Williamson gave a profound conference in London, England, the weekend 21-23 September 2007 on George Orwell’s book 1984. The following is his extraordinary sermon the last day... In this day and age when the global police state is upon us, it is more important than ever that clergy dare to speak out and warn their flock from this nightmarish abyss. Unfortunately a rare thing from Catholic bishops nowadays.” Indeed: but ... they sacked him!

[7] Guillaume Fabien, "In the Wake of the 'Williamson Affair' The case of don Floriano Abrahamowicz" *Smith's Report* No. 164, August 2009.

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